AMENDMENTS TO THE DRAWINGS

By the current amendment, Applicants submit replacement sheets of drawings for Figs. 1, 2, 10 and 11, in which the description for element 105 is changed from "Electronic Cleaning Unit" to ---Electronic Clearing Unit---.

REMARKS

Re-examination and allowance of the above-captioned application is respectfully requested.

Initially, Applicants note that the Examiner objects to the drawings on the ground that reference element 105 is used to designate both an "electronic cleaning unit" and an "electronic clearing unit", as defined at page 6 of Applicants' specification. By the current amendment, Applicant submits replacement sheets for Figs. 1, 2, 10 and 11 of the drawings, in which the phrase "electronic cleaning unit" for element 105 is changed to ---electronic clearing unit---. By the current submission of replacement sheets of drawings, element 105 in the drawings conforms to the description of element 105 provided in the specification. The Examiner is respectfully requested to confirm the acceptability of the replacement sheets of drawings, and to withdraw the objection to the drawings.

Applicants respectfully traverse the Examiner's 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) rejection of claims 1-4, 6-9 and 11-19, as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,872,850 to KLEIN et al., (hereinafter KLEIN), and 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) of claims 5 and 10 as being obvious over KLEIN in view of U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2002/0035697 to McCURDY et al., (hereinafter McCURDY).

By the current amendment, Applicants cancel original claims 1-19 and submit new claims 20-28 to clarify the issues and advance the prosecution of the application. New claims 20-22, 25 and 26 are based upon canceled original claims 1-3, 18 and 19, respectively. New claims 23, 24, 27 and 28 are not based upon any previously presented claims.

The newly submitted claims clarify that the present invention rates distribution information provided from a second information distribution provider based on a personal profile in which an evaluation value of a keyword contained in distribution information provided from a first information provider with the keyword is learned in advance based on preference information, and sends this information to the client. When distribution information from the second information distribution provider is sent to the client, the above use of the personal profile, in which evaluation values of the keywords contained in the distribution information from the first information distribution provider are learned based on preference information, makes it possible to send the distribution information from the second information distribution provider to the client with a high level of efficiency in the absence of the client's information. Applicants submit that at least this feature is not taught by the applied art of record.

Applicants submit that KLEIN discloses a system that provides an information marketplace that allows a user to specify the types of data to be transmitted to nodes in a

distributed system, as well as to specify, on a per-node basis, whether or not the node should be allowed to receive data from the user. KLEIN analyzes a preference of a user and recommends items that the user might consider to be of interest. In recommending items, KLEIN employs a collaborative filtering method (see, for example, Fig. 1, steps 102-110), in which items are recommended to a user based upon items that were of interest to other users having a similar preference.

Column 4, lines 7-9 and 63-65 of KLEIN discloses that each user profile associates items with ratings given to the items by the user. As a result, items may be rated on an alphabetic scale (e.g., "A" to "F") or a numeric scale (e.g., 1 to 10).

Applicants submit that the filtering method of KLEIN differs from that employed in the instant invention. Specifically, as noted above, KLEIN employs a collaborative filtering method to recommend information to a client. On the other hand, Applicants' invention teaches a content based filtering method, in which attributes of content (e.g., distribution information) and attributes of a preference of a client (e.g., preference attributes) are compared to recommend items the client might find to be of interest.

In the present invention, content attributes are indicated with keywords and a client's preference attributes with evaluation values that correspond to the keywords. When the content is distributed, the claimed invention selects and recommends the content of a high

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evaluation value. The keywords and evaluation values are registered in a personal profile inside a storage section in the information distribution system.

The above difference in the method of distributing information is apparent from the configurations of KLEIN and the present invention. KLEIN does not store a personal profile, in which evaluation values of keywords provided from an information distribution provider are learned. On the other hand, the content-based filtering method of Applicant's claimed invention requires such a memory. For example, in KLEIN's user profile, ratings by a user are associated directly with the items (e.g., heavy metal albums).

Accordingly, Applicants submit that KLEIN and the instant invention, as defined by the claims, employ completely different filtering methods. Applicants further submit that KLEIN fails to disclose or suggest additional features required in Applicants' claimed filtering method, and thus, fails to anticipate the instant invention, as defined by the claims.

For example, Applicants submit that KLEIN does not disclose, or suggest, maintaining the accuracy of a user profile that reflects the user's preference, and thus fails to anticipate the instant invention. According to Applicants' claimed invention, a learning process is performed to change evaluation values of keywords in a personal profile in accordance with distribution information from a first information distribution provider and

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a client's preference information about the distribution information from the first information distribution provider.

In other words, Applicants' present invention subjects the distribution information from the first information distribution provider to the learning process, but does not subject distribution information from a second information distribution provider to the learning process. This has the advantage of preventing the evaluation value of a keyword in the personal profile from being influenced by a keyword contained in a distribution information from the second information distribution provider. Thus, the accuracy of the personal profile that reflects the client's preference is maintained by Applicants' instant invention. As a result, the distribution information corresponding to the clients' preference is continuously recommended.

KLEIN forms a user profile that reflects a user's preference based on information distributed from a domain. However, KLEIN does not disclose or suggest maintaining the accuracy of this user profile. Applicants submit that when the accuracy of the user profile suffers in KLEIN, information that does not correspond to the user's preference may be recommended, which reduces the value of an information recommendation system. Accordingly, Applicants submit that an additional ground exists for concluding that the presently claimed invention is distinguishable from the applied art of record.

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Applicants further submit that the features of the instant invention that are lacking in KLEIN are not taught or suggested by the remaining art of record. In this regard, it is noted that original claims 5 and 10, which were subjected to a rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103, have been canceled without prejudice. Applicants submit that even if one attempted to combine the teachings of the various prior art devices in the manner suggested by the Examiner, one would fail to arrive at Applicants' claimed invention.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

As discussed above, Applicants' content based filtering method is neither disclosed or suggested by the applied art of record. Furthermore, Applicants submit that the applied art of record fails to maintain the accuracy of the personal profile that reflects a user's preference.
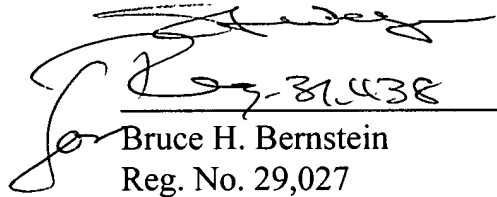
In view of the fact that none of the art of record, whether considered alone or in combination, discloses or suggests the above claimed features of the instant invention, and in further view of the above amendments and remarks, reconsideration of the Examiner's action and allowance of the present application are respectfully requested and are believed to be appropriate.

Should the Commissioner determine that an extension of time is required in order to render this response timely and/or complete, a formal request for an extension of time, under

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37 C.F.R. § 1.136(a), is herewith made in an amount equal to the time period required to render this response timely and/or complete. The Commissioner is authorized to charge any required extension of time fee under 37 C.F.R. § 1.17 to Deposit Account No. 19-0089.

If there should be any questions concerning this application, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,
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